Josef Israels

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For two beloved friends of the beautiful
as Josef Israels revealed the good and
the true through the beautiful in
his art.

For Mr and Mrs Harper
from Frank Jewett Mather

JOSEF ISRAELS

JOSEF ISRAELS

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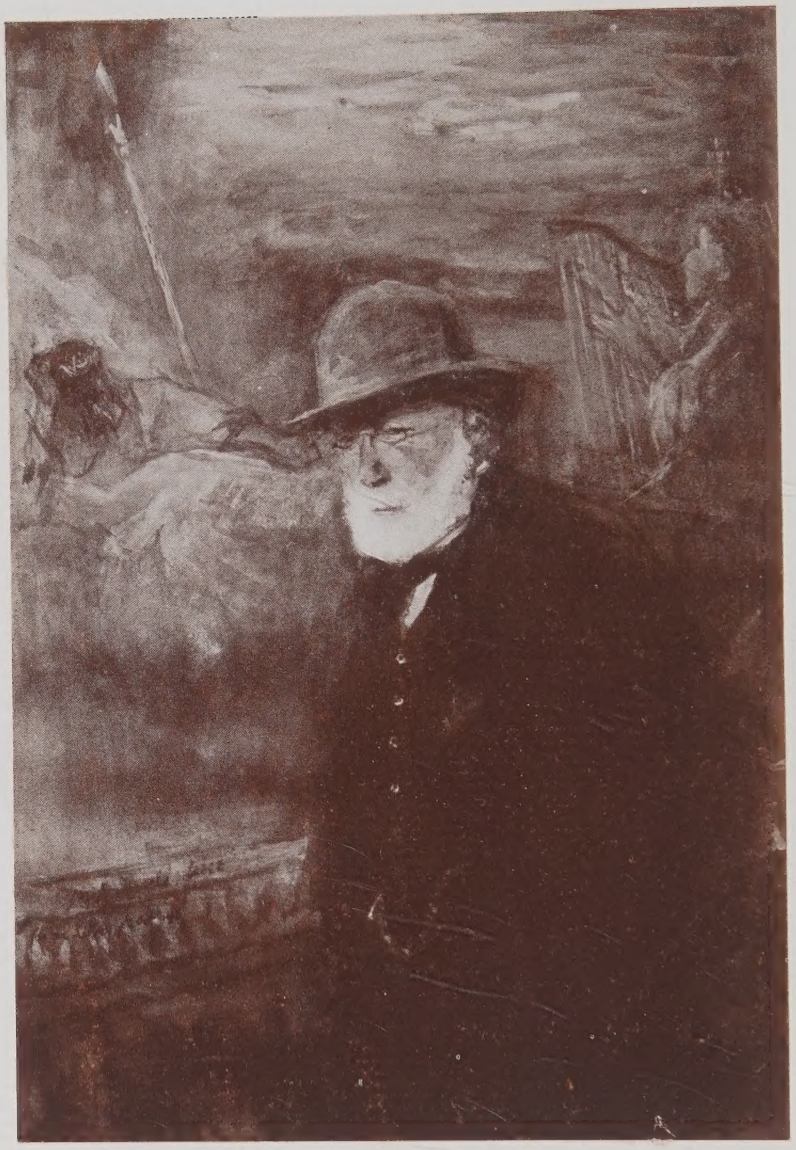

PORTRAIT OF JOSEF ISRAELS

From the collection of Edward Drummond Libbey

Josef Israels

AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED AT THE OPENING OF THE
EXHIBITION OF JOSEF ISRAELS' PAINTINGS,

Toledo Museum of Art

BY

FRANK WAKELEY GUNSAULUS

021180043989446

1912

PUBLISHED BY THE

TOLEDO MUSEUM OF ART

PRESS OF
REVIEW PRINTING & EMBOSSING CO.
CHICAGO, U. S. A.

TO

Mr. Edward Drummond Libbey

PRESIDENT OF THE TOLEDO MUSEUM OF ART,

WHOSE MUNIFICENCE HAS CREATED
THIS OFFERING TO THE
MEMORY OF HIS
FRIEND

Josef Israels

F. W. G.

THROUGH his magnanimity and that sense of proportion which has distinguished him whose life and labors will always be associated with the earliest conception and the proudest achievement of this institution, the Toledo Museum of Art, and because of the nation-wide generosity of the owners of these masterpieces whose kindness and whose loyalty to a great name and fame the world of art will not forget, we are here and now permitted to join with him and them, in calling to mind the character and career of Josef Israels.

Long ago, the essayist in the history of painting has dealt with his accomplishments in the spirit and with the technical care of a student of æsthetics. For more than fifty years, the lover of the beautiful has vied with the student of human nature at its greatest depths, or in its playful and moving surfaces, to find in Israels' hand the plummet, or eye-glass, by which we learn of this great sea called human consciousness. As a scholar of wide and accurate research in the things of the human heart, he has surpassed every expectation which the youthful student of Gröningen had led men to cherish concerning his career. Mr. H. W. Mesdag has often told me how, when Israels was a youth, and the banker-friend of his family looked forward to the education and development of a man of genius as to practical affairs, he was interrupted by some manifestation of the young man's passion for learning; but even then, far above all else, there glowed within him a lofty beacon-light—a search-light indeed—that revealed more of human nature and man's environment than any banker could ever reduce to coin or any mere pedant could confine in books of learning.

Advancing with a little more of intimacy toward Josef Israels' personality, and especially its aspects in his later career, we may well look into a characteristic chapter of his maturer life, if we seek to find what is true with regard to his openness of mind, the spring and current of his imagination, and the almost unfailing potency of his art. It must have been in 1891 that I first found Mr. Israels seriously reproducing from his mind's eye, and for what he knew was to be perhaps his greatest canvas, the most dramatic episode in the life of Saul, King of Israel. In that autobiography on canvas—his portrait of himself made for Mr. Libbey, and now reproduced at the beginning of this book—we have a wonderfully wrought moment of that tragic hour in the mighty monarch's history.

I was fairly well acquainted with the growth of that monumental work, through the kindness of Mr. Israels, from the time of its first really adequate expression, as a drawing, to the later days, when this aged and apparently infirm man climbed into the awful sunrise of that picture, and, coming down the wooden steps which he traversed so often to give the sunlight a more dramatic suggestiveness, walked backwards, step by step, into the distance by which alone he could look into the mystery and grandeur of the picture, only to go forward again and touch the face of the mad king with a deeper shade of meaning, or pour from his pencil into the harp-strings of David a more winsome music.

No one who knew less of him than his closest friends, or those who, from afar, were admitted into the kindness of his literary acquaintance to share his enthusiasms over great books, can ever say how deeply Browning's "Saul," as well

THE NEW FLOWER

From the collection of Mr. E. Layden Ford

as the poem, now almost forgotten, of a comparatively unknown Canadian writer, called "The Drama of Saul," influenced Josef Israels' comprehensive and growing intellectual and artistic life while he was painting this picture. It is an unforgettable experience in my own life and always will remain an inspiring reflection that I read to him this passage:

> "Now let hell work (or heaven) its will on Saul!
> I am beset by a new demon; still
> That chorus haunts me, and from every other
> Study my mind reverts to that foul lode-thought.
> I know that I am not in health of body;
> Hence may arise the sickness of my mind.
> For I am seized with ague of the soul,
> Now hot, now cold, now rage, now fear, in turns:
> And sometimes I believe I feel my old,
> My demon-ruled and fatal fit returning.
> O God, give me not up again to that!
> David, young roe, start from thy form, and flee
> Out of the dangerous thicket of my thoughts!"

He walked to and fro in his studio, and told me that he had been interested in Saul as the most cathedral-like and dolorous character of the Old Testament, most splendid in its ruins.

Israels knew literature, and made comparisons, the pith and point of which astonished me, as he talked of Macbeth and Lear, and the Faust of Goethe, with reference to certain problems in the career of Saul. I felt then, as I feel now, that Josef Israels would have been known as a great man, if he had essayed literary production.

After reading over this passage, which represents the king in the consciousness of his overthrown reason, he said

to me: "This man certainly understands the phenomenon of such moral insanity as was Saul's." We went to the Mauritshuis together, and he showed me how unsatisfactory, both as a painting and as a work of interpretation of human character, was the Saul there attributed to Rembrandt. He even doubted if Rembrandt could have made the mistakes, with respect to the dress and attitude, as well as certain anachronisms, which he said any Hebrew student would discover in the picture; and, in general, he pointed out the weakness of that conception of the Hebrew king and the comparative lack of power in technical achievement.

In the afternoon, he asked me to read more of this poem to which I have referred, and his own conception of the insane potentate of Israel, while under the wooing influences of the shepherd boy's music, was, as he told me, marvelously quickened into vividness and power, by the following lines:

"Still more, still more: I feel the demon move
Amidst the gloomy branches of my breast,
As moves a bird that buries itself deeper
Within its nests at stirring of the storm.
Were ever sounds so sweet!—where am I? O,
I have been down in hell, but this is heaven!
It grows yet sweeter,—'tis a wondrous air,
Methinks I lately died a hideous death,
And that they buried me accursed and cursing.
But this is not the grave; for, surely, music
Comes not t'reanimate man 'neath the clods.
Let me not think on't! yet a fiend fierce tore me.
Ah, I remember now, too much remember;
But I am better: still methinks I fainted;
Or was the whole a fearful, nightmare dream?
Nay, am I yet not dreaming? No; I wake:
And, as from dream or as from being born,

SAUL AND DAVID

In the Municipal Gallery of Amsterdam

Without the outcry of a mother's travail;
Or, as if waking from a revery,
I to myself am ushered by strange music,
That, in its solemn gentleness, falls on me
Like a superior's blessing. Give me more
Of this sweet benefit."

Now, another experience came to him from a more masterly mind. For, I had the honor to bring to him Browning's "Saul," and to read with him those haunting lines which are forever descriptive of the higher and sweeter ministry which is almost an atonement and a reconciliation with the Eternal Harmony.

Josef Israels possibly needed no help from the author of "The Drama of Saul" to realize his conception of Saul; but *here* was a distinctly great addition and enrichment to his conception of David, who, of course, shares with Saul the absorbing interest of Israels' masterpiece, as I believe it to be, just as he shares with Saul the interest of the student of that dramatic era whose master-minds they were. Indeed, I might go further, and say that young David rises out of Browning's poem with an eminence of heroism. It is a mental and moral victory, through the ministries of the art of music. If ever the Christian idea, so projected at length at Calvary in David's Greater Son, was manifested in a "proto-evangelium," it is in the effort of the young shepherd and minstrel, David, playing before Saul, to break through the discords of poor Saul's madness, and restore the man unto himself and the universe and God, by victorious harmony. What else is *the atonement?* What grander conception of the sin-bearing glory of humanity could there be?

THE TROUSSEAU

From the collection of Miss Stella D. Ford

IN a score of his pictures—and I shall refer to but one of them—Israels has comprehended and expressed the very essence of Christianity. We have had no greater preacher of the Gospel of that blessed Jew whose philosophy of salvation gives to a world maddened with sin, the music of Calvary, than the painter, Josef Israels, with the possible exception of Robert Browning, whose poem will be forever connected with the great man's picture.

One day he was painting at the chords—merely indicating the quivering strings of the harp—when he read these words of Browning's:

"Then I tuned my harp,—took off the lilies we twine 'round its chords
Lest they snap 'neath the stress of the noontide—those sunbeams like swords!
And I first played the tune all our sheep know, as, one after one,
So docile they come to the pen-door till folding be done.
They are white and untorn by the bushes, for lo, they have fed
Where the long grasses stifle the water, within the stream's bed;
And now one after one seeks its lodging, as star follows star
Into eve and the blue far above us,—so blue and so far!"

He went on reading of "tune after tune," to my great amazement, and broke off saying, after "the tune of the marriage," "I know nothing finer than this:"

"And then, the great march
Wherein man runs to man to assist him and buttress an arch
Nought can break; who shall harm them, our friends?—Then the chorus intoned
As the Levites go up to the altar in glory enthroned.
But I stopped here—for here in the darkness, *Saul groaned.*"

I have often thought that the light in the picture of Israels' delineating Saul, under the spell of David's music, is

the light which comes after that darkness in which *"Saul groaned."*

Mr. Greenshields' interesting remarks on Israels are to be coupled with his charming essay on the author of "The Drama of Saul," the forgotten poet. What a gracious thing, in the history of painting and poetry, it is, that one is remembered thus, and that this forgotten poet has some adumbration of his bright but evanescent life in the immortal picture of Israels, and that, long after his death, Browning worked through the tremulous but unerring hand of the old painter, as he touched his Saul, making us read to him from Browning these words:

> "At the first I saw nought but the blackness; but soon I descried
> A something more black than the blackness—the vast, the upright
> Main prop which sustains the pavilion: and slow into sight
> Grew a figure against it, gigantic and blackest of all;—
> Then a sunbeam, that burst thro' the tent-roof,—showed *Saul.*"

Or, pouring out his love upon Saul, as, at last, David cries to God:

> "Oh, speak through me now!
> Would I suffer for him that I love? So wouldst Thou—so wilt Thou!
> So shall crown Thee the topmost, ineffablest, uttermost Crown—
> And Thy love fill infinitude wholly, nor leave up nor down
> One spot for the creature to stand in! It is by no breath,
> Turn of eye, wave of hand, that Salvation joins issue with death!
> As Thy love is discovered almighty, almighty be proved
> Thy power, that exists with and for it, of being beloved!
> He who did most, shall bear most; the strongest shall stand the most weak.
> 'Tis the weakness in strength that I cry for! My flesh, that I seek
> In the Godhead! I seek and I find it. O Saul, it shall be
> A face like my face that receives thee: A man like to me,
> Thou shalt love and be loved by, forever! A hand like this hand
> Shall throw open the gates of new life to thee? See the Christ stand!"

WASHING THE CRADLE

From the collection of Mr. Henry C. Lytton

GREAT and precious was the inheritance of Josef Israels from the Dutchmen of the Seventeenth Century. The main contribution they made to him was an attitude of mind and a point of view with reference to the facts of our common life. No one has more justly estimated these values than George Eliot, who says:

"It is for this rare, precious quality of truthfulness that I delight in many Dutch paintings, which lofty-minded people despise. I find a source of delicious sympathy in these faithful pictures of a monotonous homely existence, which has been the fate of so many more among my fellow-mortals, than a life of pomp or of absolute indigence, of tragic suffering, or of world-stirring actions. I turn without shrinking from cold cloud-borne angels, from prophets, sibyls and heroic warriors, to an old woman bending over her flower-pot, or eating her solitary dinner, while the noonday light, softened, perhaps, by a screen of leaves, falls on her mob-cap, and just touches the rim of her spinning-wheel and her stone jug, and all those cheap, common things which are the precious necessaries of life to her; or I turn to that village wedding kept between four brown walls, where an awkward bridegroom opens the dance with a high-shouldered, broad-faced bride, while elderly and middle-aged friends look on, with very irregular noses and lips, and probably with quart pots in their hands, but with expressions of unmistakable contentment and good-will.

"Paint us an angel, if you can, with a floating violet robe, and a face paled by the celestial light; paint us yet oftener a Madonna, turning her mild face upward, and opening her

arms to welcome the divine glory; but do not impose on us any æsthetic rules which shall banish from the regions of art those old women scraping carrots with their work-worn hands, those heavy clowns taking holiday in a dingy pot-house—those rounded backs and stupid weather-beaten faces that have bent over the spade and done the rough work of the world—those homes with their tin pans, their brown pitchers, their rough curs, and their clusters of onions. In this world there are so many of these common, coarse people, who have no picturesque, sentimental wretchedness. It is so needful that we should remember their existence, else we may happen to leave them quite out of our religion and philosophy, and frame lofty theories which only fit a world of extremes. Therefore let art always remind us of them; therefore let us always have men ready to give the loving pains of a life to the faithful representing of commonplace things—men who see beauty in these commonplace things, and delight in showing how kindly the light of heaven falls on them."—Adam Bede, Chapter XVII.

TOILERS OF THE SEA

From the collection of Mr. Frank G. Logan

MEN like Euripides and Josef Israels quicken with an earthly immortality, when they seem most mortal. In her "Vision of Poets," Mrs. Browning has perhaps written the finest appreciation the world may find, in so small a compass, of the poet Euripides:

> "Our Euripides, the human,
> With his droppings of warm tears,
> And his touches of things common,
> 'Till they rose to touch the spheres!"

He belongs to the morning time, and lives so deeply in the primitive and permanent, that, whenever men in recent days touch the essential and primal, something sings in the spirit of Euripides. Robert Browning speaks of these unique moments in life when the streams at the heart of things flow forth, and when one is enchanted by a "sunset touch" or "a chorus ending from Euripides." Thus one has to go back to an earlier age than ours to find a parallel for the greatest of modern Dutch painters, who just lately was so signally honored as he walked the streets of The Hague, that men regarded him, next to his queen, as Holland's most illustrious citizen.

Josef Israels, who was an Hebrew of the Hebrews, "of the stock of Israel, of the Tribe of Benjamin," was yet so much more than an "Israelite in deed and in truth," as was Nathaniel of old, that he will ever illustrate, in the simplicity and beauty of his life, as well as in the fluency and power of his art, the cosmopolitan spirit. For example, he was Greek. He is the Euripides of modern pictorial art.

No man approaches him in the humanizing influence which he has exercised, to the utter demolition of the *in*human and to the partial destruction of the *un*human, in the painting of pictures.

Millet, with the French peasant; and Burns, with the Scotch peasant; touch less strongly and tenderly the chords divine which vibrate through the human. I once asked a distinguished tragedian why he did not reproduce Browning's drama of "Strafford." I did not think that Macready scarcely gave either Browning or "Strafford" a fair chance many years ago. The modern tragedian, whose every look and syllable are art itself, told me that "Strafford" lacked "*human* interest." No artist is his total self, until he invests all his powers and experiences in the character he portrays. It is impossible to do this in "Strafford," for he and his career do not manifest the primal and ineradicable emotions, ideas and purposes of humanity.

THE RAY OF SUNSHINE

From the collection of Mrs. H. N. Torrey

ON the other hand, Josef Israels has painted the heart of the human child so completely, even in his treatment of the oldest of his characters—for his figures are nothing less than characters—and he has also discovered for us the significance of laborious age, or resistless strength of body and mind, even in the smallest tot playing with boats upon a little ocean of his own, that one must turn to him as one turns to a supreme poet, for the interpretation of himself. The secret of this magnificent sweep of things and of the validity of his interpretation lies wholly in his personality. He is one of those who illustrate the truth of the saying that "we are all human, yet some of us are more so than others."

Israels' humanity, considered as a factor for discovering and interpreting the human phases of this universe, is an item of character, and therefore is always in evidence. We feel it in his paintings, so appealingly eloquent everywhere, because it is of him; and it is therefore not less convincing when one is admitted into the home and life of this true son of Rembrandt. Whatever a man is by birth and tradition and hereditary equipment, if he lives deeply and broadly enough, he will strike out into the deep, rich humanity which is larger than himself and root himself there. This is illustrated in the fact that there is a Greek element easily discernible when the extremities of Israels' power are called upon. He is cosmopolitan and ageless. It is like living in an age entirely, as Ruskin says, "the greatest men, whether poets or historians, live by constant law," and at the same time, living *through* the age into the ageless, as did Shake-

speare and Rembrandt, touching the universal, or at least finding a symbolism which helps both the temporal and the eternal to understand one another. Every Dutch item in Israels' product is fruit from the all-human tree.

As I have watched him, painting with the ardor and devotion with which Isaiah prophesied and David ruled in Israel, he seemed to be uttering that one prayer from one of the Psalms most familiar to his boyhood: "Open Thou mine eyes, and I will behold wondrous things out of Thy Law." Here was a Jew, so intensely living his life that his essential humanity burned through it. He went into the larger from the less, only by being utterly loyal to the less. It took years for Israels to find himself more than a Jewish pharisee in thinking and in art expression. In his emancipation from hard formulary, he, like the great Jew Jesus, appealed to the mightier, fresher, and essential Hebrewdom, which was quite overgrown with the traditions of scribe and pharisee. But Israels has left many a canvas, which shows that he was a true *"son of the law."* After a few years of laborious legalism (which is always necessary in order that we may get from our Sinai to our Calvary, in anything), there rose a spirit of freedom and power within Israels, which at length got beyond all "the mint, anise and cumin of the law," and found the artistic gospel which was in Franz Hals, Rembrandt and Ver Meer of Delft, as it was a religious gospel in Isaiah the prophet and David the singer. It was love triumphant, not over law, but by law, and through law.

OUR DAILY BREAD

From the collection of Mr. Edward Drummond Libbey

WHEN he was a child in Gröningen at ten years of age, his attention was given to the Talmud, and for several years he was spoken of as the coming rabbi. He has been credited with keeping up his studies in rabbinical lore, and with a profound mastery of the literatures of the law and the prophets. His art-method has grown only as his character-method. Faithfulness to the few things alone has made him ruler over many things. Personally, and from a literary and philosophical point of view, he was one of the interesting, and I shall say impressive, men of modern times. All the fine experience of soul which the Hebrew nation may have rescued from eloquent prophets, deep-toned psalmists, valiant kings, and aspiring servants of God everywhere, while these have been led through ages of grief and joy, now by the waters of Babylon and now before the marble-turreted temples of Jerusalem, had wrought upon this face and head, creating also the attitude of bodily grace, inspiring the vigor and nobility which were but outward expressions of that inner reality whose influence the history of art will never forget—Josef Israels.

There is a kind of Anglo-Saxon particularly in evidence today who is so little in spirit and so great in form only, that he preserves for us only the peculiarities of the Saxon. He is very much of a force in a falling market, as life's commerce goes on. He cheapens everything. Here was a Jew so careless of literalism and form, and so suffused and exalted by the spiritual qualities of that most insistent and self-evidencing race, that we recognize in him, not a single peculiarity of his own people, but a mental and spiritual

cosmopolitanism, fascinating if it were not so nearly majestic. In the drawing which represents his being presented at the Royal Academy in London, by the larger and handsome Alma-Tadema, only Israels' back is seen, but the whole man is there; and no one would mistake this vibrant and intense physical personality for anything else than the instrument of a high and beautiful soul. It is so in his art, for wherever anything of his appears, it is incontestably of Israels and of all of him.

THE SEXTON OF KATWIJK

From the collection of Mr. Frank G. Logan

HOMEWARD

From the collection of Mr. Ralph Cudney

NO one who has beheld one of the many attestations of honor and reverence given to him by the people at Amsterdam and The Hague can fail to recognize the fact that he was the indubitable and worthy center of it all. As I saw the vast and brilliant audience which ranged from orchestra boxes to highest gallery, and observed the blaze of those gems which had long been possessed by the aristocratic families of Holland, I thought only the prima donna might punctuate the glory with a personal presence to be recognized. The most charming of modern singers was, however, wisely waiting, to come to her own laurels at a later moment. A greater personality would first give piquancy to the scene. From an unobserved doorway, quite in front of the audience, came an insignificant, trembling figure, crowned with snowy white hair, and triumphant with three score years and ten of achievement. He was in evening dress, and wore medals of his various orders. They seemed almost too numerous, for so slight and unimposing a figure. In an instant, the whole audience was upon its feet. A smile from the venerated artist made the jewels more radiant, and the great assemblage stood until Josef Israels had taken his seat.

All arts, pursuits and achievements of men were interesting to this open-eyed human being. I once sent to him as a gift the "Autobiography of Joseph Jefferson." His letter in reply is so characteristic of vigorous and many-sided mentality that I venture to print it, even with the quaint and charming mistakes which the great Dutchman made in handling English:

My Dear Sir:—

Many thanks for your kind letter and for your conversation with Joseph Jefferson through which I come in possession of the fine volume of the autobiographies of your friend. He is a very pleasant story teller, and I shall send him reciprocally a book that I wrote in Dutch, but who also is translated in English. It is my voyage in Spain and illustrated by myself. As I do not know the address of Mr. Jefferson, you will, perhaps, be so friendly to send. I was wondered about the fine engravings on the autobiography and how good it is printed and edited. I have not been quite through it, but the part I read is very interesting and amusing, and I would not wait too long for thanking you and the author. Therefore this:—*Art is a commonwealth for itself and to deal with members of that community has for me always a great charm.*

Believe me, dear sir,
Affectionately yours,
Josef Israels

Dr. F. W. Gunsaulus
Chicago

The *commonwealth* of which he speaks was broadly represented in his library and studio, on the tables of which one saw magazines in all modern languages of culture, fine drawings from continental and oriental studios, choice bits of sculpture, and the portraits of his friends.

As an author of the book on Spain, he is luminous, full of humor, and most interesting and instructive when, for example, he speaks of Velasquez and Rembrandt:

"'Eh bien!' said my French friend. 'Was I exaggerating when I talked to you about the glorious Velasquez?'

"Erens pointed out that it was the fashion lately to place Velasquez above Rembrandt.

"'That is true,' I replied, 'I have heard it said; but I think the opinion frivolous. For, although Velasquez is an exceptional painter, so is Rembrandt, and he is much more besides. If Rembrandt had never taken a brush in hand, his etchings alone would have placed him among the fore-

IN THOUGHT

From the collection of Mrs. Nathaniel French

most creative artists. The excellence of his talent as a painter is but a small portion of all that combines to form the enormous genius of this jewel with its many facets, his imagination, his simplicity, the poetry of his somber, mysterious effects, the depth and virtuosity of his workmanship. Velasquez never painted heads like the Staalmeesters. The hair lives, the eyes look at you, the foreheads wrinkle at you. This is my first visit to Madrid, and I rejoice at being able to enjoy this, to me, new talent of Velasquez. But when I look at his masterpiece, 'Las Lanzas,' and think of Rembrandt's 'Night Watch,' I continue to regard the Spanish *chef-d'oeuvre* with the greatest appreciation and delight, but, in my thoughts I fall back before the 'Night Watch' as before a miracle. There you have a breadth of brush that no one has ever equaled. All of which painting is capable is united in that: fidelity to nature and fantasy, the loftiest masterliness of execution, and in addition a sorcery of light and shadow that is all his own. Rembrandt's was an unique mind, in which the mystic poetry of the North was combined with the warmth and virtuosity of the South. The work of Velasquez, on the other hand, glows calmly and peacefully from these glorious walls. He works, but does not contend; he feels gloriously, but wages no combat; Rembrandt's gloomy silence in darkness, his striving after the infinite and inexplicable, are unknown to him; serene and sure, he sits enthroned upon the high place which he has made his; but Velasquez's art embraces only his own surroundings, whereas Rembrandt's plays its part in every human life, and in addition strives after the historic and the unseen.' "

OLD AGE

From the collection of Mr. Edward Morris

IF the finest thought and enterprise of the greatest of Hebrews have ever disclosed their true roots, it is in the fact that they have led civilization to enthrone the little child, instead of the pretentious scholiast or the bejeweled monarch. This is precisely what Israels has done with the art of painting. Hebrew of Hebrews, he has "set the child in the midst of them."

Another phase of the matter is this: he has irradiated life's commonplace with the glory of the human soul at its highest. Fishermen and their toils, plain mothers with their children in cradles, and aged scribes or old-clothes sellers, have marched along in the procession with his wonderful and unsurpassed delineation of the grandeur of Saul, King of Israel. No man, save Robert Browning, has been at once so poetic and philosophic in interpreting the David of Saul's tragic hour. But nature, aside from man, is equally responsive to him, for, paradox that it may be, nature is never separable from man in his eyes. The range of interpretation of humanity manifested in the multitude of small and great which he has placed upon his canvases is not less wonderful when the skies, for example, of his pictures are studied with reference to the moods of mind which they indicate.

Children of the Sea

These be young Newtons playing on life's beach,
Sailing Thought's tiny craft o'er sand and shell,
Learning Life's secret through old Ocean's speech
And new-borne-burdens, therefore learning well.

CHILDREN OF THE SEA

From the collection of Mr. E. Layden Ford

ISRAELS did not live in a *duo*-verse, least of all in a *multi*-verse, but in a *uni*-verse. If a man is pulling a boat along a canal, and indicating to us the long way which goes through age to death, the skies above him are quivering with the moment in which every afternoon drops into eventide. No one, since Rembrandt, has made the physical universe, which both of them have drawn upon but sparsely, so palpitant with human emotion, sympathy, desire and an inspiration entirely human. Israels might have been one of the great landscape-painters of all time. He has the directness of nature. A great painting must be full of vision, but not of *re*-vision. He has the visual power, and with it the virtuosity characteristic of Hals. A thoroughly systematic mind, like every man of genius, he is not a slave to a system. A man who can grow, after seventy-five years have gone over him and through him, to the superlative power which creates the "Saul" and "The Scribe," is far beyond the possibility of mannerism. Israels has lived for this harvest of energy, insight, fluency, and adequacy of expression. In every artist's experience, intention and achievement, *im*pression and *ex*pression, must be as nearly identical in the moment and motive as possible. In the creation of the mightier canvases of Israels, these were contemporaneous. This is the divine quality of art. "God said: let there be light, and *there was light.*"

THE PANCAKE

From the collection of Mr. E. Layden Ford

WHEN he passed from us, Rembrandt's greatest son had dropped his brush and palette. The hues of these two noblest painters of earth's bravest nation melted into the permanent glory, in which the two hundred years which separated them seem but the modulation of some splendid line, or the play of some evanescent color too lovely to abide. Josef Israels was with his master in the Jerusalem which he dreamed of as a Jewish lad, and "the boys and girls are playing in the streets thereof."

As Rembrandt placed little wooden shoes upon his children, in delineating the glory of that beloved Jew, Jesus, so Josef Israels defied the stilted proprieties of his Hebrew learning by hanging the Christian's rosary from the mantelpiece in the house of "The Cottage Madonna," herself a child of Rachel and Rebekah.

Genius ranges over the length and breadth of the soul's experience; and genius never reported the deep, sweet currents of the soul's life more adequately than by the pencils of Rembrandt and Israels.

The primitive and permanent were Israels' and are his forever. To see him at his work, mingling his colors or touching his canvas, was to behold a Prince of the House of David within the Holy of Holies of God's nature and man's life, unafraid and joyous at his priestly task.

That slight figure, only five feet in height and less than one hundred pounds in weight, when he was painting King Saul's most tragic hour, walking back and forth, meditating and attacking again the problems on the canvas before him, climbed up the stair to the upper ranges of his picture to

touch the distant hills of Palestine with a deeper tint, so ensouled with mastery that you saw only a giant to whom it was easy to fling from morn's drama a beam of light upon the shepherd boy's harp, with all the rapture and force with which Browning wrote his "Saul" and Handel transformed the Hebrew king's melody into immortal music.

Both these illustrious masters—Browning by his poetry; Handel by his music—set the soul of Israels upon the completion of the task he had chosen for his own consummate work in painting, fifty years before. The achievement will be visited fifty years hence in Amsterdam, when the artistic conscience will say: "I have seen Rembrandt's 'Night Watch'; let me now see Israels' 'Saul and David.'"

THE ARMY AND THE NAVY

From the collection of Frank W. Gunsaulus

HE succeeded at last with the sublime, because he had mastered the simple. At the opening of his career he sought to paint in "the grand style." He became only grandiose. There was hope for the young man from Holland, when he left Paris and went back homeward to the seashore and the ordinary life of true-hearted men, women and children.

Failure and sickness conspired in vain against him. A new character was wrought within him, when he left the complexities and delicacies of feverish art which was only artifice.

He followed instead *"the little child."*

This has led him to greatness and an imperishable name. He was an aristocrat in birth and breeding and culture. The life of the common people taught him the democracy of sweet sentiments and noble heroisms.

When the archbishop of Paris saw his "Cottage Madonna" in the Salon, he said to the eminent Jew: "Mr. Israels, you are a great Catholic."

Even then, he appeared not more noble than when I saw him touch for the last time one of the pictures of childhood reproduced in this memorial, and say: *"'Except ye become as little children, ye shall not enter the kingdom of heaven.'"*

The Long Way

So long and urgent is man's destined way
Why must it shadowy be?
There blows at waning of a labored day
Life's bud of mystery.

A flower with mellow tints alive;
The violet flush o'er gold.
The sky abloom for them who strive
In youth of hope, being old.

O Rembrandt's son, in days more wrought
Than his with light and shade—
More sad with introverted thought:
Thanks for thy faith displayed!

For darkness palls not luminous as thine,
The light hath healing balm;
Leaving to eyes disturbed no garish sign;
Instead unwonted calm.

The darkness on thy palette censured oft,
Like to the psalmist's rune,
Holds subject streams whose advent bright and soft
Whelms clouded hearts with noon.

Thou Hebrew prophet, mage of sighs and tears,
Singer of joy with pain
And hours of prayers and mother-hopes and fears,
And childhood's glad refrain.

By Babylon's high towers and rivers bright
Thy fathers sang and toiled,
While strings of pure and vitalizing light
Within their sadness coiled.

Soul, struggle on in shifting shadows born
Of light and hearten care:
Till labor wake in all-revealing morn,
Fair and forever fair.

THE LONG WAY

THE COTTAGE MADONNA

From the collection of Mrs. H. N. Torrey

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